

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 2, 5-13, 16-24, 45 and 48-50 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 42-44, 51 and 52 have been canceled by this amendment.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1, 2, 5-13 and 16-24 are allowed, and that claims 45 and 48-50 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this amendment, Applicants note that claim 45 has been rewritten in independent form so as to include all of the features of base claim 44, thereby placing claim 45 in condition for allowance. Claims 48-50 depend from claim 45 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

In addition, regarding claim 21, Applicants note that a minor typographical error therein has been corrected by the present amendment.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 42-44, 51 and 52 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Aburakawa et al. (US 2003/0007214). As noted above, claims 42-44, 51 and 52 have been canceled by this amendment.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants submit that all of the claims of the application are now in condition for allowance, an indication of which is kindly requested. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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